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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND  
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SUBJECT: Syria/Iran, Peace/Bush's Call for International  
Conference, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestinian Territories (7/20-22)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on July 20 reported Iranian President Ahmadinejad's summit with President Asad on July 19. Talks focused on regional developments and bilateral relations. Banner headlines featured the joint press conference at the conclusion of their talks. The Iranian President called on "enemies of the region who try to trouble it to abandon their hostile schemes and plans to attack the interests of this region, or they will be burned by the wrath of the region's peoples," he said. He added: "We hope that the hot weather of this summer would coincide with similar victories for the peoples of the region, and with consequent defeat for the enemies of the peoples of the region."

Ahmadinejad depicted Syrian-Iranian relations as "cordial, excellent and extremely deep," adding that "the two countries share common stands on regional issues and face common challenges." President Asad said that "Syrian-Iranian relations are swiftly and continuously developing, and we are very optimistic about the visit's goals and outcome and about the region's future." A final statement issued by the Foreign Ministry said that talks focused on the Palestinian issue and that Syria and Iran underscored the rights of the Palestinian people to liberate their lands, return home and establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. They urged all Palestinian parties to return to dialogue and reconciliation, in order to preserve the unity of the Palestinian people. Syria and Iran also condemned the sacrilegious Zionist act of destroying parts of Al-Aqsa Mosque in an attempt to demolish its Islamic and historical identity, calling for a serious move by international organizations, particularly the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to prevent such aggressive violations of holy places.

Syria and Iran stressed the need for preservation of the unity of Iraqi land, people, sovereignty and independence, and to maintain its Islamic Arab identity. They condemned all terrorist acts targeting Iraqi citizens and establishments and demanded the pullout of occupation troops.

Regarding Lebanon, Syria and Iran underlined the significance of boosting Lebanese national unity and reconciliation and expressed support for all that the Lebanese agree upon to guarantee security and stability in Lebanon, touching upon the Lebanese people's right

to resist the repeated Israeli aggressions and to regain all still occupied Lebanese lands.

On the Iranian nuclear file, both sides underlined the firm right of signatory states to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to peaceful use of nuclear energy, announcing that any discrimination regarding developing countries 'exercise of this right is unacceptable, as resolutions and policies of parties to this treaty must be respected. The joint statement expressed the firm conviction of the need to free the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction and drew the international community's attention to the dangers of Israeli nuclear weapons for international and regional peace and security

Papers also reported that on July 19 Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal al-Miqdad discussed the situation of Iraqi refugees in Syria with UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees L. Craig Johnstone. Johnstone called for support and help to Syria to handle the huge requirements of the Iraqi refugees that the Syrian government has been shouldering during the few past years.

On the Lebanese issue, papers featured statements by Lebanese officials criticizing the role of US Ambassador Feltman in Lebanon.

End of summary.

## 12. Selected Headlines:

"Syria and Iran: Mutual respect, friendship and cooperation. President Asad: Bilateral relations are developing rapidly, and we are optimistic about the future of the region. President Ahmadinejad: Our cooperation is in favor of peace and security in the region" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/21)

"Israel releases 250 Palestinian prisoners and arrests other 300 in the West Bank. Deputy Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Abed El Raheem Mallouh: The issue of Palestinian prisoners must be passed to the International Court" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/22)

"A split within the Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party in protest of the party's corruption. Al-Sayegh: One who owns millions of dollars is neither progressive nor socialist" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 7/22)

"Lebanese opposition: Feltman leads the governing team and speaks on its behalf" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/22)

"Israeli planes fly over Nahr al-Bared again. Lebanese circles: Washington hinders solutions" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/21)

"The Lebanese army is wrapping up the operation in Nahr al-Bared. Nationalist factions: The US is responsible for chaos" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/20)

"Washington seeks UN help to break impasse in Iraq. Baghdad requests definition of the role of coalition forces" (Independent al-Watan, 7/22)

"The hell of explosions burns the occupation army. Two US troops and three British killed in Iraq" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/21)

"Clinton: Bush has failed on the political and the military levels in Iraq" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/20)

"Deputy FM Miqdad tells Johnstone that those who caused the plight of the Iraqi refugees must shoulder their responsibilities" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/20)

"Lavrov: The reactivation of the peace process must be on all tracks" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/20)

## 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"The Quartet, the US and Myths"

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Isam Dari, Chief Editor of government-owned Tishreen, wrote (7/21):  
"The problem of the international Quartet on the Middle East is that it is governed by the US veto and the US position and is unable to have an independent vision.... The problem with the neoconservatives who rule the United States is that they believe in the Talmudic creed, which is racist par excellence...."

"Because neoconservatives are the decision-makers in the United States, they are the ones who draw up the strategies and policies of the current US Administration. And since this administration controls the Quartet, whatever comes from this committee is a translation of American ideas, which are derived from Zionist thought and the instructions of the Talmud...."

"Some verses in the Talmud place Jews above all other races and encourage the killing of non-Jews.... It might be said that we are anti-Semitic -- as is customarily done -- but Americans and Israelis are anti-humanity, and they kill people around the clock because their myths make them believe that 'he who kills a foreigner [non-Jew] offers a sacrifice to God....'

"Aside from the myths that have become a constitution for a superpower and a racist entity, we ask: What has the Quartet offered for peace, and how does it see peace in the first place...? So far we have heard nothing other than orders and demands that must be fulfilled to protect Israel, safeguard its security, and defend its existence. As for Arab rights, they are mentioned only through timid expressions that are not binding or based on Chapter Seven...."

"Peace, as the Quartet understands it, must serve Israel, not the Palestinian people, which a big country in the Quartet itself helps besiege and starve...."

"The Quartet accepted the appointment of Tony Blair as its envoy.... How can a man with the blood of the women and children of Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon on his hands be a man of peace and an envoy of peace?"

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"Syria and Iran, Deep-Rooted Relations"

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Mundhir Khalil Id, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (7/20): "The Iranian President's visit reflected the deep-rooted, historical, and strategic relations between the two countries, relations built to serve the joint interests of the two peoples, the Arab and Islamic causes, and the security and stability of the region...."

"The visit reaffirms the strategic relations between the two countries and Iran's support for Syria under all circumstances, especially against American-Israeli threats.... The visit confirms that the two countries agree in their views of the regional situations and the events in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq. They support national accord in those countries, back the resistance, and reject the occupation. They also seek to foil the American objective of separating each country from the other...."

"It was a successful visit by all standards. It stressed that the relations between Syria and Iran are firm and stable and that the two countries see eye to eye on most regional issues. The visit is a new solid block in the joint wall of resistance and opposition to the vicious American-Israeli onslaught on the region."

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"A Show"

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Izz-al-Din al-Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (7/20): "When Syriasa says that it does not trust Israelis when

they talk about their desire for peace and that it wants them to match their words with actions and with written guarantees about withdrawal from the entire occupied Golan up to the 4 June 1967 border, it is because it knows exactly how Israelis think, what they want, and why they talk about peace.

"As is clearly known, the Olmert government is not in the least interested in peace.... Some informed figures in Israel stress that the Olmert government talks about peace while preparing for aggression because it is the weakest of Israeli governments and because it is struggling to stay in power, nothing more, benefiting from some acrobatic movements and meetings intended for show....

"US President George Bush's call for an international peace conference in the Fall -- he, through the White House spokesman, backtracked from the word conference and changed it to meeting -- is part of this Israeli publicity stunt. The US Administration never stops offering support for Olmert to compensate him for his losses in the July aggression, which he implemented on behalf of the Bush administration, which, in turn, is applying pressure on Olmert to prevent him from resuming peace talks....

"Olmert is talking about peace with the intention of obtaining photos to show Israelis. The Bush administration, which does not want to resume the peace talks in the first place, is using everything in its power to assist this Israeli publicity objective. The real intentions of the two sides are in the realm of war and aggression.... Syria realizes all this and takes it into consideration."

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"Between vagueness and Indifference"

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Ahmad Hamadah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (7/20): "President Bush's call for an international conference on the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations was vague and late, as noted by many observers.... Yet Israel did not care much about the call and ruled out negotiations with Palestinians on a final solution to the problem....

"This American vagueness and Israeli indifference towards the cause of peace is nothing new or passing in the policy of the two sides. All the heads of Israeli governments since the launch of the Madrid peace conference denied the logic of peace, evaded its requirements, strongly called for the circumvention of its constituents, and disavowed legitimate international resolutions using all maneuvers and evasive tactics....

"The US Administration, for its part, never offered genuine support for the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. As a result of these Israeli and US policies, the region will continue to suffer tension and instability...."

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"Important Messages"

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Ali Nasrallah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (7/20): "In his oath-taking speech, President Al-Asad sent a number of clear messages to the international community....

"The most important message is that Syria, in its domestic policy, pays attention only to the interests of its people.... With regard to peace, Syria is ready to resume (public not secret) negotiations, but only if Israel offers written guarantees on the full return of the occupied Golan based on UN resolutions and the land-for-peace principle....

"A third message was addressed to those who linked themselves to the positions of the superpower although they know the facts in the region.... This message says that Syria has nothing to offer but dialogue. It does not have consolation prizes to give to anyone."

Corbin